

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2863

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 22, 2010

Title: An act relating to transferring food assistance programs to the department of agriculture.

Brief Description: Transferring food assistance programs to the department of agriculture.

Sponsors: House Committee on General Government Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Blake, Chandler, Liias, Van De Wege, Jacks and Wallace).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/10, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/22/10 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hatfield, Chair; Ranker, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Haugen, Morton and Shin.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: In 1986 the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) that provides support to food banks was instituted in the Department of Commerce (Commerce). A tribal voucher program was added in 1991. The program utilizes 28 contractors who serve 340 food banks and distribution centers, and 32 tribes provide vouchers or food bank services. Currently, the program received an appropriation of \$10 million in state funds for the current biennium.

The Department of General Administration (GA) has administered federal food programs provided from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This program started as the butter and cheese program in 1981, and was originally referred to as the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program. The program has changed over the years and is now known as The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). This federal program has a requirement for state matching funds. This program serves 420 food providers including food banks, shelters and meal providers. In 2009 TEFAP provided 14.6 million pounds of USDA provided food.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Additionally, GA administers a second federal program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Washington State was approved for CSFP in 2001.

Summary of Bill: EFAP in Commerce is transferred to the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Additionally, TEFAP and CSFP in GA are transferred to the WSDA.

The director of the WSDA is authorized to exercise powers and duties prescribed by law with respect to the administration of food assistance programs that are assigned to the department. Additionally, WSDA is authorized to adopt rules and to enter into contracts and agreements necessary to implement the programs. Statutory authority for Commerce to coordinate and provide food assistance to distribution centers and needy individuals is deleted.

The transfers take effect on July 1, 2010. The transfers include records, appropriations, employees, rules, and existing contracts and obligations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2010.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Department of Agriculture is enthusiastic about the transfer of emergency food assistance programs to the department. It makes sense to combine programs of two agencies into one; it is a natural fit at WSDA because of its relationship with producers, the food industry and with USDA. Food Lifeline receives 24 million pounds of donated food from a variety of sources and distributes it to 300 local food banks in western Washington. The continued support to these community-based organizations is appreciated.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Dan Newhouse, Director of Agriculture; Kelsey Beck, Food Lifeline; Mike Moran, Second Harvest.